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Taxonomy & Inventories

A new spider species of *Scytodes* Latreille, 1804 from Jiangxi Province, southern China (Araneae, Scytodidae)

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Abstract

Background

Despite the increasing discovery of new spider species in Jiangxi Province, most are entelegynes or mygalomorphs, with haplogyne spiders being seldom reported. However, during a decade-long survey of spiders in Jinggangshan National Nature Reserve, two species of *Scytodes* were identified, including one known species, *S. liui* Wang, 1994 and one new species.

New information

A new species, *Scytodes tanjiashui* Liu, **sp. nov.**, is described from Jinggangshan National Nature Reserve, Jiangxi Province, China. Morphological illustrations, SEM pictures, ink drawing, DNA barcode, photos of live specimens and a distribution map are given. The total number of the known species of *Scytodes* from China is raised to 11.

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Keywords

haplogyne spiders, Jiangxi Province, Jinggangshan National Nature Reserve, taxonomy, survey

Introduction

The spider family Scytodidae Blackwall, 1852, commonly known as spitting spiders, is a distinctive group, characterised by their unique prey-capture strategy, which involves ejecting a venomous, glue-like silk from their chelicerae to immobilise prey (Jocqué and Dippenaar-Schoeman 2006). The genus *Scytodes* Latreille, 1804 is the most species-rich within the family, currently comprising 229 described species globally. This genus exhibits a broad distribution, having been recorded on all continents, except Antarctica and primarily in tropical and subtropical regions (World Spider Catalog 2025). However, research on this genus in China remains notably limited, with only 10 species recorded to date, most of which are documented, based solely on female specimens. Since 2000, systematic revisions of this genus have synonymised over 20 species (Brescovit and Rheims 2000, Rheims et al. 2006, Rheims et al. 2007) and transferred four to other genera (Rheims et al. 2006, Zamani et al. 2022, Lin et al. 2023, Seropian 2024). These studies have delineated more clearly the taxonomic boundaries of the genus.

In China, the scytodid fauna is represented by species from the genera *Scytodes*, *Dictis*, L. Koch, 1872 and *Stedocys* Ono, 1995 (World Spider Catalog 2025). While new species discoveries in China have been ongoing, the spider fauna of Jiangxi Province remains relatively understudied. Recent investigations in the region have revealed a trend where newly-described spiders often belong to taxa with complex genitalia, such as entelegyne spiders or mygalomorphs (Xu et al. 2015, Liu et al. 2017, Liu et al. 2019, Liu et al. 2020a, Liu et al. 2020b, Liu et al. 2022, Liu et al. 2022a, Liu et al. 2022b, Wang et al. 2024, Jiang et al. 2025, Liu et al. 2025, Wang et al. 2025), while haplogyne spiders like scytodids are reported less frequently. This highlights a potential neglect in discovery records and underscores the need for further dedicated surveys of these often-overlooked groups.

Despite this general pattern, preliminary surveys in the Jinggangshan area of Jiangxi have confirmed the presence of scytodids, with two species of *Scytodes* already discovered from this region. Our study documents a new species of *Scytodes* collected from Jiangxi Province. This discovery not only represents the first record of the genus *Scytodes* from Jiangxi Province, but also significantly extends the known distributional range of this spitting spider.

Materials and methods

Specimens were examined using a Jiangnan SZ6100 stereomicroscope with a KUY NICE CCD camera. Male and female copulatory organs were dissected and examined in 80–85% ethanol. The endogynes were cleaned with pancreatin (Álvarez-Padilla and

Hormiga 2007). All specimens were photographed with an Olympus CX43 compound microscope with a KUY NICE CCD camera. The illustration was made by using a drawing tube and inked on ink jet plotter paper. For SEM photographs, the specimens were dried under natural conditions, sprayed with gold with a small ion-sputtering apparatus (ETD-2000) or were uncoated and then photographed with a Zeiss EVO LS15 scanning electron microscope.

DNA extraction, amplification and sequencing. DNA was isolated from legs (small size for right I−IV) and extractions performed with a Qiagen DNeasy Tissue Kit following a modified protocol of Valdez-Mondragón and Francke (2015). A DNA fragment corresponding to approximately 600 bp of the mitochondrial cytochrome coxidase subunit 1 (COI) gene was amplified using the same primers (LCO1490 and HCO2198) used by Valdez-Mondragón and Francke (2015). Amplifications were carried out using a Veriti 96 Well Thermal Cycler (Applied Biosystems) following a modified protocol of Valdez-Mondragón and Francke (2015), in a total PCR volume of 20 µL: 2.5 µL DNA, 2.3 µL H2O, 10 µL Multiplex-PCR Kit of Qiagen (which includes dNTPs, MgCl2, Taq PCR polymerase and Buffer), 3.2 µL of primers (1.6 of LCO1490, 1.6 of HCO2198), and 2 µL of Q-Solution (Qiagen). The PCR program was as follows: initial step 15 min at 95°C; amplification 35 cycles of 35s at 94°C (denaturation), 1 min 30s at 40°C (annealing), and 1 min 30s at 72°C (elongation), and final elongation 10 min at 72°C.

All measurements were made using a stereomicroscope (AxioVision SE64 rel. 4.8.3) and are given in millimetres. Leg measurements are given as total length (femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus and tarsus). The distribution map was generated with ArcGIS v. 10.8 (ESRI Inc.). All examined specimens are deposited in the Animal Specimen Museum, College of Life Science, Jinggangshan University, Ji'an, China (ASM-JGSU). Terminology of the male palp and female genetalia follow Rheims and Brescovit (2009) and Dupérré and Tapia (2023).

Leg measurements are given as total length (femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus, tarsus). The abbreviations used in the figures and text are as follows: ALE − anterior lateral eye, CL – cheliceral lamina, Em – embolus, HR – hyaline ridge, HP – hyaline pocket, PLE − posterior lateral eye, PME − posterior median eye, PR – positioning ridge, Spe – spermathecae, SPr – sclerotised process.

Taxon treatment

Scytodes tanjiashui Liu, sp. nov.

- ZooBank 4A650E41-974F-47E1-88AA-5F20F011F98A

Materials

Holotype:

a. scientificName: *Scytodes tanjiashui* sp. nov.; country: China; stateProvince: Jiangxi; locality: Ji'an City, Jinggangshan County Level City, Jinggangshan National Nature

Reserve, Longtan Scenic Spot; verbatimElevation: 856 m; verbatimCoordinates: 26°35'45.60"N, 114°8'20.40"E; georeferenceProtocol: GPS; samplingProtocol: sieving; eventDate: 31/5/2014; individualCount: 1; sex: male; lifeStage: adult; catalogNumber: ASM-JGSU-Ara6782; recordedBy: Liu Ke-ke; occurrenceID: FA553227-CA22-5E87-BBA4-EFAC971285B8

Paratypes:

a. scientificName: *Scytodes tanjiashui* sp. nov.; country: China; stateProvince: Jiangxi; locality: Ji'an City, Jinggangshan County Level City, Jinggangshan National Nature Reserve, Longtan Scenic Spot; verbatimElevation: 929 m; verbatimCoordinates: 26°35'31.20"N, 114°8'16.80"E; georeferenceProtocol: GPS; samplingProtocol: sieving; eventDate: 31/5/2014; individualCount: 1; sex: male; lifeStage: adult; catalogNumber: ASM-JGSU-Ara6783; recordedBy: Liu Ke-ke; occurrenceID: 2FA35EF9-2725-56AC-8E4D-2F44E090DD47

b. scientificName: *Scytodes tanjiashui* sp. nov.; country: China; stateProvince: Jiangxi; locality: Ji'an City, Jinggangshan County Level City, Jinggangshan National Nature Reserve, Jingzhushan; verbatimElevation: 936 m; verbatimCoordinates: 26°33'15.24"N, 114°7'10.13"E; georeferenceProtocol: GPS; samplingProtocol: sieving; eventDate: 20/5/2025; individualCount: 1; sex: female; lifeStage: adult; catalogNumber: ASM-JGSU-Ara4256; recordedBy: Liu Ke-ke; occurrenceID: 99890955-22E5-56A4-BBE6-897D638CD042

c. scientificName: *Scytodes tanjiashui* sp. nov.; country: China; stateProvince: Jiangxi; locality: Ji'an City, Jinggangshan County Level City, Jinggangshan National Nature Reserve, Jingzhushan; verbatimElevation: 936 m; verbatimCoordinates: 26°33'15.24"N, 114°7'10.13"E; georeferenceProtocol: GPS; samplingProtocol: sieving; eventDate: 20/5/2025; individualCount: 1; sex: female; lifeStage: adult; catalogNumber: ASM-JGSU-Ara4248; recordedBy: Liu Ke-ke; occurrenceID: 3F227D2D-45E4-509B-BCDC-CADFE2DE26D4

Description

Male (Holotype). Habitus as in Fig. 1A and B. Total length 4.79. Carapace slightly domed, 2.47 long, 1.91 wide. Clypeus height 0.16. Eye sizes and interdistances: PME 0.11, ALE 0.14, PLE 0.14; PMEs close touching, ALE and PLE close touching, ALE−ALE 0.54, ALE−PME 0.20, PLE−PLE 0.72, PLE−PME 0.34. Lateral eyes on a tubercle. Chelicerae (Fig. 1B and Fig. 4A−C) with one lamina on distal cheliceral furrow and four retrolateral marginal teeth. Endites longer than wide, with a claw-like tip and sparse short setae on surface. Labium pear-shaped, wider than long. Sternum oval, longer than wide, anterior margin fused with labium, lateral margin with subtriangular sclerites, directed at the base of coxae, posterior margin blunt, with thick setae on surface. Leg measurements: I 18.98 (5.12, 0.58, 5.40, 7.13, 0.75); II 12.57 (3.61, 0.53, 3.66, 4.08, 0.69); III 7.75 (2.42, 0.53, 2.23, 2.14, 0.43); IV 8.32 (2.26, 0.38, 2.75, 2.44, 0.49). Leg formula: 1243. Abdomen (Fig. 1A and B) 2.32 long, 1.88 wide, covered with slender hairs.

Colouration (Fig. 1A and B). Carapace yellowish, medially with four long brown stripes and laterally, with three gradually becoming longer brown stripes. Chelicerae pale with dorsal longitudinal brown stripe. Palps yellow with prolateral and dorsal brown spots. Endites yellow, anterior part pale. Labium yellow, yellowish at tip.

Sternum pale yellow with yellow margins. Legs orange, femora I–IV with ventral brown transverse stripes. Abdomen cream-coloured with six faint dark brown transverse stripes around the centre.

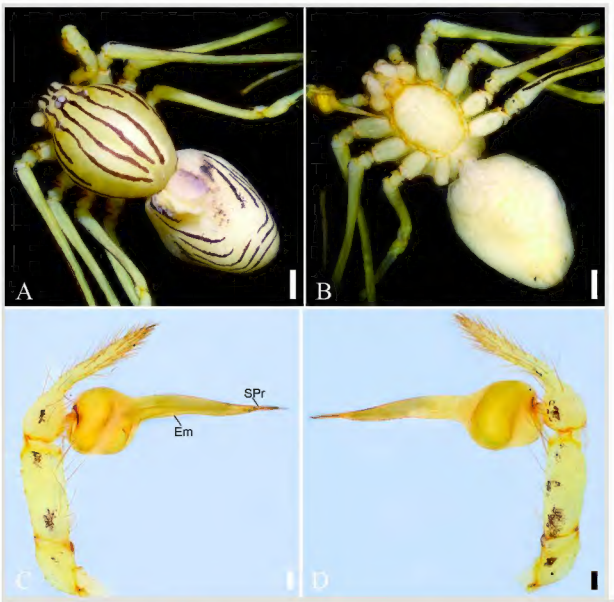


Figure 1. doi

Scytodes tanjiashui Liu, sp. nov., male holotype. **A** Habitus, dorsal view; **B** Same, ventral view; **C** Palp, prolateral view; **D** Same, retrolateral view. Abbreviations: Em – embolus, PR – positioning ridge, SPr – sclerotised process. Scale bars: 0.5 mm (A, B), 0.1 mm (C, D).

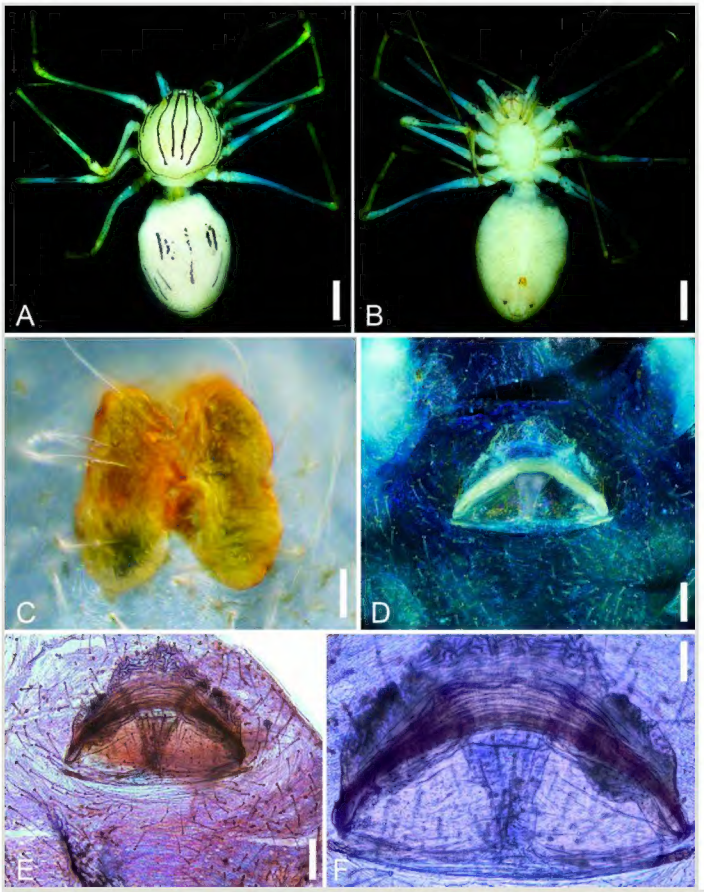


Figure 2. doi

Scytodes tanjiashui Liu, sp. nov., female paratype. **A** Habitus, dorsal view; **B** Same, ventral view; **C** Same, detail of retromarginal teeth, ventral view; **D, E** Vulva, dorsal view; **F** Same, detail of spermathecae and positioning ridge, ventral view. Scale bars: 40 μm (A, B, D), C 10 μm (C), 0.1 mm (E–G).

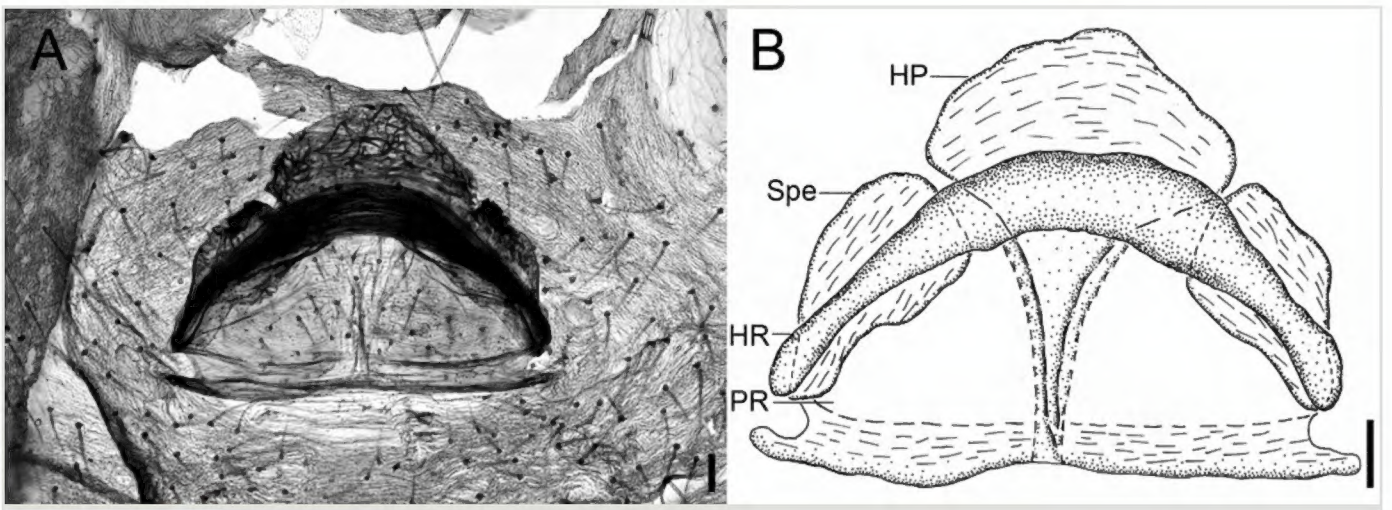
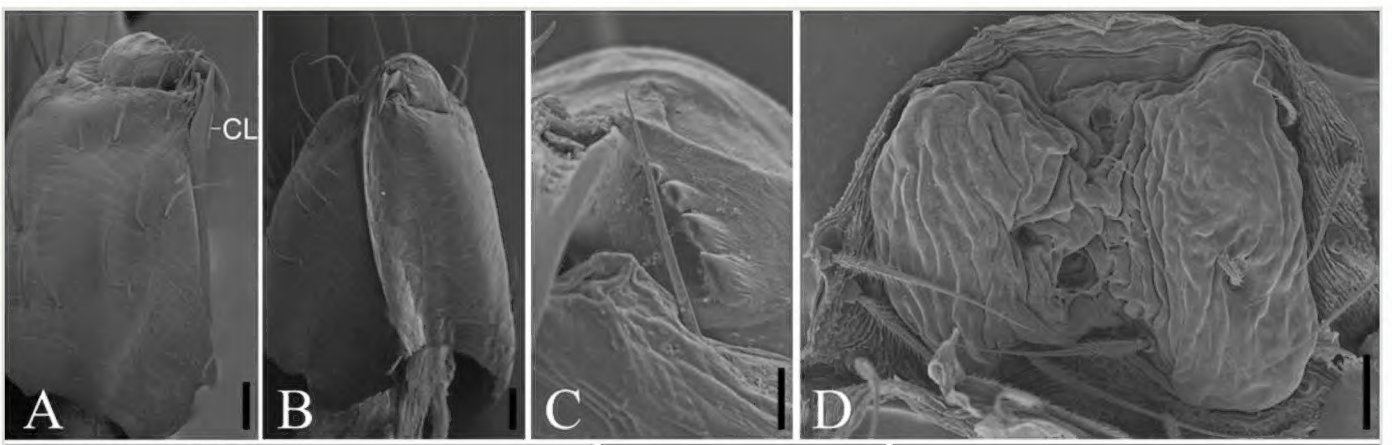


Figure 3. doi

Scytodes tanjiashui Liu, sp. nov., female paratype. **A** Vulva, dorsal view; **B** Same, dorsal view. Abbreviations: HR – hyaline ridge, HP – hyaline pocket, PR – positioning ridge, Spe – spermatheca. Scale bars: 10 μm (A, B).



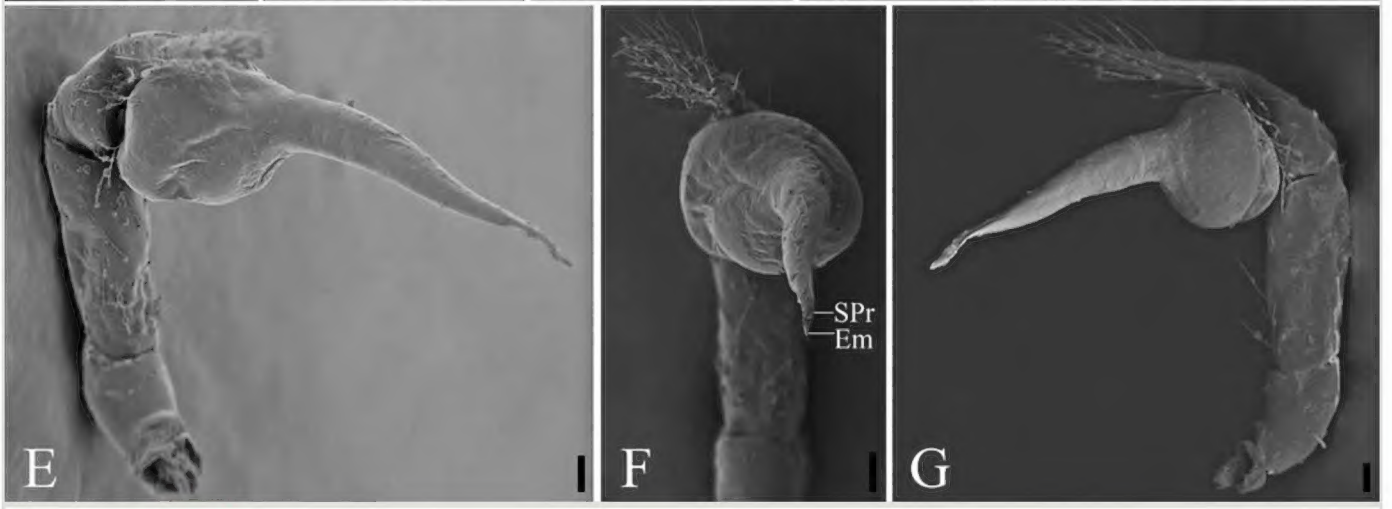


Figure 4. doi

Scytodes tanjiashui Liu, sp. nov., male and female paratypes. **A** Male paratype, chelicera, prolateral view; **B** Same, ventral view; **C** Same, detail of retromarginal teeth, ventral view; **D** Female paratype, abdominal hook, ventral view; **E** Male paratype, palp, prolateral view, slightly ventral; **F** Same, ventral view; **G** Same, retrolateral view. Abbreviations: CL – cheliceral lamina, Em – embolus, SPr – sclerotised process. Scale bars: 40 μm (A, B, D), C 10 μm (C), 0.1 mm (E–G).

Palp (Fig. 1C, D and Fig. 4E–G). Palpal tibia, shorter than cymbium. Cymbium with a slightly swollen base. Bulb 0.40 long, 0.37 wide, embolus 0.81 long, the tip divided into two parts, one handle-shaped sclerotised process and one triangular embolus.

Female (Paratype). Colouration pattern as in male. Habitus as in Fig. 2A, B and Fig. 5 A and B. Total length 5.20.

Figure 5. doi

Scytodes tanjiashui Liu, sp. nov. **A, B** Female. Photographed by Jiongxing Zhang.

Carapace domed, 2.59 long, 1.97 wide. Eye sizes and interdistances: PME 0.11, ALE 0.13, PLE 0.15; PMEs close touching, ALE and PLE close touching, ALE−ALE 0.54, ALE−PME 0.23, PLE−PLE 0.71, PLE−PME 0.36. Clypeus height 0.18. Leg measurements: I 14.42 (3.91, 0.43, 4.25, 5.14, 0.69); II 9.66 (2.80, 0.48, 2.69, 3.14, 0.55); III 6.84 (2.11, 0.49, 1.88, 1.80, 0.56); IV 8.22 (2.14, 0.38, 3.13, 2.12, 0.45). Abdomen (Fig. 2B, C and Fig. 4D) 2.61 long, 2.32 wide, ventroposteriorly with a pair of sac-shaped hooks.

Genitalia (Fig. 2D−F, Fig. 3A and B). In ventral view, with a pair of large subtriangular positioning ridges, slightly separated by the narrow median septum. In dorsal view, extremely transparent through cuticle, with a rainbow-shaped hyaline ridge extending across the vulva and a pair of ham-like spermathecae, located at the base of the hyaline ridge, adjacently with cap-like, membranous hyaline pocket.

Diagnosis

The male of *Scytodes tanijashui* sp. nov. resembles that of *S. fusca* Walckenaer, 1837 (cf. Fig. 1A, C, D and Fig. 4E–G vs. Sampathkumar et al. (2022): fig. 1A, C and D) in having a long, narrow terminal portion of bulb, but can be easily separated from it by the yellowish abdomen with several paired thin black brown stripes (vs. light grey with several transverse darker bands) and the nearly straight embolic tip (vs. slightly curved). The female of the new species resembles *Scytodes florifera* Yin & Xu, 2012 in having semi-elliptical hyaline pocket (cf. Fig. 2D–F vs. Yin et al. (2012): fig. 23d), but can be distinguished by the chelicerae with four retrolateral marginal teeth (vs. absent), the symmetrical dark brown abdominal stripes (vs. lacking) and the oval spermathecae with a short stalk (vs. finger-like).

Distribution

Known only from Jiangxi Province, China (Fig. 6).

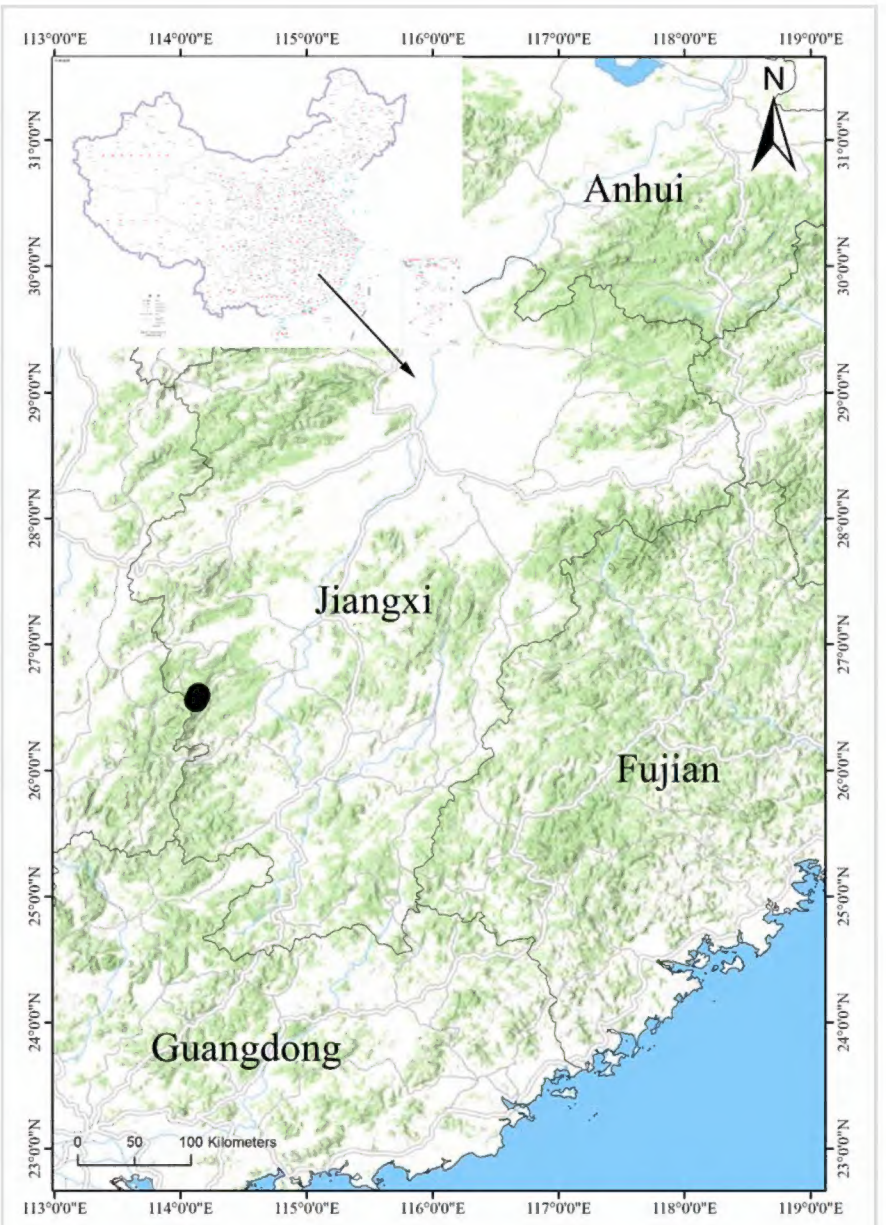


Figure 6. doi

Records of *Scytodes tanijashui* sp. nov. (black circle) from Jinggangshan National Nature Reserve, Jiangxi Province, China.

Ecology

This is a free-running spider species that is usually found in dark places within broad-leaved forests, such as under stones, under logs and in leaf litter (Fig. 5A and B).

DNA barcode:

ATATAGACTTCTGGGTGTCCAAAGAATCAGAATAGGTGTTGGTATAGAATGGGGTCT
CCTCCTCCGGCGGGGTCGAAGAAGGTGGTGTTGAGGTTGCGGTCTGTTAGTAGTAT
AGTGATGCCAGCAGCTAGGACTGGGAGAGATAGGAGAAGTAGGACTGCTGTGATT
AGGACGGATCAGACGAAGAGGGGCGTTTGGTATTGGGTTATGGCAGGGGGTTTTAT
ATTGATAATTGTTGTGATGAAATTGATGGCCCCTAAGATAGAGGAGACACCTGCTAG
GTGTAAGGAGAAGATGGTTAGGTCTACGGAGGCTCCAGGGTGGGAGTAGTTCCCT
GCTAAGGGAGGGTAGACTGTTCAACCTGTTCCTGCTCCGGCCTCCACTATAGCAG
ATGCGAGCAGGAGTAGGAGAGAGGGAGGTAAGAGTCAGAAGCTTATGTTGTTTATG
CGGGGAAACGCCATATCGGGGGCACCGATTATTAGGGGAACTAGTCAGTTGCCA
AAGCCTCCGATTATGATGGGTATTACTATGAAGAAGATTATTACAAATGCATGGGCT
GTGACGATAACGTTGTAGATGTGGTCGTTACCTAGAAGGTTGCCTGGCTGGCCCAG
CTCGGCTCGAATAAGGAGGCTTAGAGCTGTGCCTAGGACTCCAGCTCATGCGCCG
AATAATAGGTATAGTGTTCCAATGTCCTTATGATTAGTAGAAA

(GenBank accession number: PX961463).

TTTCTACTAATCATAAGGACATTGGAAGATTGTATCTATTGTTTGGGGGGTGAGCTGT
TATAATAGGGACTGCTATGAGAGTTATTATCCGTATTGAGTTAGGGTCTACTGGAAGT
TTGTTAGGTGATGATCATTTATATAATGTTATTGTTACTGCTCATGCTTTAGTGATGATT
TTTTTTATAGTGATACCTGTTATAATTGGAGGGTTTGGAAATTGATTAGTTCCTTTAAT
GTTAGGTGCACCTGATATAGCTTTTCCTCGTATAAATAATTTAAGTTTTTGATTATTA
CCTTCTTCTTTATCTTTGTTATTAATATCTTCTATAGTTGACAGTGGGGTAGGTGCTGG
TTGAACTATTTATCCTCCTTTAGCTAGAGATTTAGGGCATTCTGGAGTTTCTGTTGAT
TTAGCTATTTTTTCATTACATTTGGCAGGGGCATCGTCGATTATGGGGGCAGTTAATT
TTATTACTACTATTATTAATATACGGAGTACTGGTATAAATTTTGATAAGGTTCCTTTGT
TTGTTTGGTCTGTTTTAGTAACAGCTGTATTATTATTGTTGTCTTTACCCGTATTAGCT
GGGGCTATTACGATACTTTTAACTGATCGAAATTTTAATACTTCTTTTTTTGATCCTT
CTGGGGGAGGAGATCCTGTTCTGTTTCAACATTTATTTTGATTCTTTGGACACCCA
GAAGTTTACAT

(GenBank accession number: PX961464).

Discussion

This study describes the new species *Scytodes tanijashui* sp. nov. from the Jinggangshan National Nature Reserve in Jiangxi Province. This discovery not only enriches the records of haplogyne spider diversity in Jiangxi, but also extends the known distribution range of the genus *Scytodes* in China. Morphologically, through Coomassie blue staining, positioning ridge — a structure commonly found in many species of

Scytodes — is located at anterior genitalia in this new species. This morphological distinction may reflect a different characteristic in its genital structure or suggest a special phylogenetic position. Combined with its narrow geographical distribution limited to the Jinggangshan area, this species may represent a morphologically and ecologically specialised group. Further investigation using molecular phylogenetics and comparative morphology is warranted to clarify its taxonomic status and evolutionary relationships.

Acknowledgements

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